

OCT 10 2001

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5 MODERATOR BROWN: I think our speaker's not,  
6 Ralph, you ready yet, or shall we -- okay. Glad you  
7 could make it.

8 MR. McCracken: Thank you.

9 MODERATOR BROWN: We've been saving a space  
10 for you.

11 MR. McCracken: Good. All right, good  
12 evening. And may the Honorable Department of Energy  
13 Secretary Abraham pay some attention to what I have to  
14 say.

15 I'm Ralph McCracken. I live in Amargosa  
16 Valley, which is fairly close to the proposed Yucca  
17 Mountain Site. And I got a few things to say. I farm  
18 here. I live here. I own property here, and all the  
19 rest of that kind of stuff that goes along with trying  
20 to make a living here.

21 I am continuing to be concerned at the  
22 graphics, the visual pieces that are used in these,  
23 this site suitability book of some 400 pages. Amargosa  
24 Valley is continuing to be characterized as an  
25 intersection. You go to great lengths to show how much

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1 property is going to be taken out of the public  
2 inventory, withdrawn, to house this project. But  
3 Amargosa Valley continues to be characterized as an  
4 intersection.

5 The fact is, Amargosa Valley is just about as  
6 big as the proposed site for Yucca Mountain. We're a  
7 rural, agricultural community. Fairly well scattered  
8 out. And -- we're not like a suburb of 1200 people to  
9 a moderate sized town. Our area is characterized as  
10 being out in the middle of nowhere. Well, nowhere is  
11 shrinking. With the current construction of a shopping  
12 center at the north end of Las Vegas, Wal-Mart is now  
13 85 miles from here. With the completion of McDonald's  
14 in Pahrump, McDonald's is 60 miles away. We're not  
15 exactly out in the middle of nowhere.

16 I was disappointed to see that the population  
17 numbers that was used in your current publication,  
18 proposed -- give me a title, please.

19 MR. BARRETT: Preliminary Site Suitability  
20 Evaluation.

21 MR. McCracken: Thank you, preliminary site  
22 suitability, uses some 10-year-old population figures.

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23 We went through a census exercise in this country a few  
24 years ago to provide current data. I don't see it  
25 being used. So let me give you some current data for  
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1 the population of this area.

2 It's not approximately 900 people, like your  
3 being presented with. It's closer to 1200, if you want  
4 to talk in round figures, and I know of probably six  
5 people that have moved into this valley, maybe even  
6 eight, since the population census was made. This is a  
7 growing area. Properties are being subdivided. Homes  
8 are being built, or brought in, set up a place.

9 People are coming here with their dreams and  
10 their convictions and their desire to live in a nice  
11 place. The, this place has dry air, it has clean air.  
12 It has million dollar sunsets, and the logo -- the --  
13 not logo, but the slogan that's used by Amargosa Valley  
14 is, refers to the champagne air and the million dollar  
15 sunsets.

16 Most of the folks around here enjoy what they  
17 have in terms of natural phenomena, and they are  
18 interested in seeing them continue to be the way they  
19 are. Once I found the old population data in this

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20 report, and I'm not a scientific technician enough to  
21 really dig in to the technicalities of the evaluation  
22 that's offered here, question comes to mind, however,  
23 is, how much of the data, other data is equally skewed  
24 in this report? I don't know.

25 Perhaps this should be subjected to the

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1 review of some totally, not domestically, but totally  
2 unbiased group. Perhaps even a foreign group might  
3 want to look at this thing. And give you their  
4 opinion. Preliminary publications of anything, even a  
5 draft copy of something, when it gets widely circulated  
6 and read, especially when it's got some size to it,  
7 once people take the time to read that, they are not --  
8 they're not predisposed or inclined to read the final  
9 draft with as much interest and energy as they read the  
10 preliminary, whether it differs significantly or not,  
11 because, oh, we've already read that. We've read the  
12 preliminary. We think we know what's in there.

13 They're probably just going to cross a few  
14 T's, dot a few I's, make some spelling corrections, put  
15 the pages in right side up and continue on. The --  
16 what's the name of that publication -- the

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17 Environmental Impact Statement, thanks for your  
18 patience -- in there, the preliminary draft of the  
19 Environmental Impact Statement had some interesting  
20 maps in there, and if you didn't know the area, some of  
21 the routes that were proposed on those maps looked  
22 great. Until you realized the town of Pahrump of about  
23 20,000 people is not on one of those maps, on one of  
24 those routes. I say this to encourage you to delve  
25 deeply into whatever's being presented to you. Because  
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1 you were not here at the beginning.  
2 But, you do have the power to terminate this  
3 exercise at any time. You are in command. You are the  
4 one that has to report back to Congress. One point  
5 that should have derailed this whole exercise was when  
6 they got through running the tunnel boring machine  
7 through this mountain, and one of our rarest rainstorms  
8 came along, and it rains, yes, it does rain in the  
9 desert occasionally. Well, there was water dripping  
10 from the inside of the tunnel. From the topside of the  
11 tunnel. On the inside. It was dripping on the workers  
12 inside the tunnel.

13 Congress asked for a suitable site. They

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14 gave several criteria that would make any site  
15 unsuitable. One of the areas, one of the criteria was  
16 dry. Well, when it rained, and the water came through  
17 the mountain, into the tunnel, it wasn't dry. That  
18 should have been enough to drive your predecessor back  
19 to Congress, saying, hey, this site may not work out.  
20 Perhaps we should look somewhere else. But, no. This  
21 project had enough momentum, enough money had been  
22 spent, that somebody, somewhere along the line, was  
23 afraid to say enough is enough.

24 I challenge you, Secretary Abram to say  
25 enough is enough. This project makes the feather  
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1 bedding of the history books look like nothing. And,  
2 yes, this government has wasted money before. But,  
3 there's nothing wrong with saying stop. Perhaps there  
4 are other sites here in this country that are suitable,  
5 perhaps even more suitable. But you will never know  
6 until you look.

7 A lot of effort has been made to say, oh,  
8 yeah, we can overcome this shortcoming and that  
9 shortcoming, and we can do this and we can do that, to  
10 make this site suitable, but the bottom line is, that

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11 this site does not meet some of the basic suitability

12 criteria that were presented for you to evaluate this

13 mountain against.

14 Let's shift directions here a little bit.

15 Let's talk about some of the impacts this project will

16 have on the people and on the businesses here. We are

17 rural, yes. We are farming. At the present time, the

18 primary commodity that's produced here is hay. But,

19 with the growing market in Las Vegas, vegetables are a

20 possibility. The production of vegetables. We have a

21 dairy here, actually, technically, it's two or three

22 dairies that produce common, ordinary, everyday milk,

23 and they also produce an organic product. Well, my

24 vision of the future is that when this project is in

25 place, and perhaps even as soon as when it's in place

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1 and they're repackaging the nuclear waste at the hill

2 site, that someone will come along and say, oh, by the

3 way, let's draw a circle around Yucca Mountain. You

4 say okay, everything that comes out of that circle will

5 not be considered -- will not be eligible to be

6 considered as organic product.

7 We have some hay farmers in this valley right

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8 now that are producing, quote, organic hay. I've yet  
9 to see a cow eat a piece of plastic hay, but that's  
10 behind that. You know, those are some of the economic  
11 impacts that are going to happen sooner or later,  
12 questions that will be raised. Another, another item  
13 that is going to take one heck of a lot of money and  
14 time and effort to figure out, is what direction, and  
15 what kind of volume, and what kind of speed, does the  
16 underground water in this area have? Most everybody's  
17 in agreement that it's not a singular flow through  
18 here.

19 We're still waiting for some of the work that  
20 the USGS did, shoot, I guess pushing three years now,  
21 for them to come out with their final numbers, final  
22 chemistry of the water, out of the wells that they took  
23 their samples on. There was hope that by taking these  
24 samples, they could put out some pertinent data that  
25 would help whoever was interested in tracking the water  
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1 flows.

2 I don't want to be characterized as a  
3 anti-nuker. I'm not an anti-nuker. I want to see this  
4 thing done right, whether it's here, in Texas, in



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5 Virginia, in a granite mountain, I don't care where it  
6 is. But I want it to be done right. And when you got  
7 a leaky mountain, in terms of letting water in, and  
8 you're going to be bringing in leaky containers,  
9 because apparently you can't build a container big  
10 enough to keep all the, whatever it is in, you got your  
11 leaky mountain, you got your leaky containers, and  
12 you're expecting us to somehow survive it all. Well,  
13 if you look around the country, wherever you have your  
14 nuclear projects, you have sickness that isn't  
15 characteristic of other parts of the country where  
16 there are not nuclear projects.

17 MODERATOR BROWN: You're at the 10-minute  
18 mark now.

19 MR. McCracken: Okay, do we have anybody else  
20 that's waving a hand?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Keep talking, Ralph.

22 MODERATOR BROWN: I don't see anybody waving  
23 their hand.

24 MR. McCracken: I'll yield the floor to  
25 anybody that wants to talk. I'm almost done. I got a

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1 few more things to say.

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2       MODERATOR BROWN: That's fine, go ahead.

3       UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm listening.

4       MR. McCracken: Doing it right, that's what  
5 it comes down to. Congress asked for the site to be  
6 evaluated. They wanted it done right. This project  
7 looks like it's out of control. It looks like what  
8 you've got here is, hate to use victim of irresponsible  
9 management, but I think that's what it comes down to.  
10 You've got people here, you've got careers here, you've  
11 got managers here that all are looking forward to their  
12 retirements. And if you pull the plug on this project,  
13 where do they go? Where you going to keep them  
14 employed? Where are they going to work? Where are  
15 they going to retire from?

16       I know that when the test site closed down, a  
17 lot of these test, former test site workers had  
18 eligibility to work on this Yucca Mountain Site  
19 characteristic project. Well, they should have  
20 eligibility to work on something else somewhere else.

21       So there you are. You've got a lot to think  
22 about. Not just my comments, but a lot of other  
23 people, with a lot more expertise, and a lot more heart  
24 and emotion that are telling you, look out, this thing

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25 is a big problem.

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1           One other quick little thing that I talked  
2 about at an NRC meetings, oh, shoot, I guess that goes  
3 back a year, year and a half ago, is that over my farm,  
4 and at this end of, northwestern end of the valley,  
5 some of the fighter pilots that are out here for  
6 training at the Nellis Air Force Base like to come up  
7 into this part of the country and go to the west side  
8 of Highway 95, which is in and out part of the Nellis  
9 Air Force properties and training ranges and so on, and  
10 hide from radar. Yes, they fly low enough and quick  
11 enough, there's, there's areas out there that you can  
12 hide from radar. And at the NRC hearings, I suggested,  
13 you know, someone really wanted to create a big mess,  
14 draw a lot of attention to themselves, whether they're  
15 locally disgruntled or internationally with a different  
16 agenda, wouldn't take that much to either fly an  
17 airplane from someplace else, or bring one in parts  
18 here and put it together, and do some sort of a bombing  
19 or terrorist-type activity.

20           I did see a few pens and pencils starting  
21 moving at that meeting when I suggested that, because

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22 if Nellis Air Force Base can't keep track of their own  
23 jets, how can they keep track of something that has a  
24 clandestine mission, shall we say? Yes, you can,  
25 somebody could tell you, oh yeah, we'll take care of  
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1 that, we'll build some more radar sites. Come on,  
2 that's, there's more to it than that. Do it right.  
3 But you don't know if this is the right place to do it  
4 until you've looked with the same energy that this  
5 place has been looked at, elsewhere. Thank you for  
6 your time.